Hybridity of Cultural Nationalism in Korean Popular Music
- From Saeui Chanmi to Jeongtong Hip-hop
한국 대중음악에서 나타나는 문화적 민족주의의 혼종성: “사의 찬미”에서 “정통 힙합”까지

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출처
Source
대중음악, 2016.11, 218–245 (28 pages)

발행처
Publisher
한국대중음악학회
The Korean Association for the Study of Popular Music

URL
http://www.dbpia.co.kr/Article/NODE07114885

APA Style

이용정보
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2018/04/06 12:16 (KST)

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Hybridity of Cultural Nationalism in Korean Popular Music: From Saeui Chanmi to Jeongtong Hip-hop*

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1. Introduction
2. Nationalism and popular culture
6. Conclusion: Nationalism(s) in Korean Popular Music

This paper focuses on three instances of Korean popular music history - colonial popular songs in the 1920-30s, the “youth culture” of rock and folk music in the 1960-70s, and Korean hip-hop since the 1990s - in which the meaning of nation and national culture came forward and was hotly contested. Nationalism as a political ideology finds its cultural expression in popular music, but at the same time nationalist ideology can be transformed by the global nature of the music. Specifically, the hybridization of traditional, Japanese and

* This work was supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea Grant funded by the Korean Government(NRF-2007-361-AM0005).
Western musical forms in colonial pop songs, the repression of rock and folk by the authoritarian national culture doctrine, and the question of language and nationality in hip-hop are all illustrative of the hybridity of cultural nationalism in Korean popular music.

Key words: cultural nationalism, hybridity, rock, folk, hip-hop

1. Introduction

The history of Korean popular music exhibits a tangled array of political, social, and cultural threads. Since its inception during the colonial period, Korean popular music has been closely intertwined with nationalist ideology in both form and substance. From the very beginning, Korean pop was a hybrid of traditional Korean and foreign musical elements of both Eastern and Western origin, including Japanese *ryōkōka* and American Jazz. In such a hybrid form, musicians and audiences have found their ways to express a Korean cultural identity. The tension between the global and the national in popular music, however, ended up with destructive collisions in a highly contentious atmosphere of authoritarian South Korea during the 1960-70s.

As opposed to government propaganda songs espousing militarist nationalism, American-influenced rock and protest folk music, represented by Shin Joong Hyun (*Sin Jung-byeon*) and Kim Min-gi respectively, sought for a fundamentally different vision of the Korean nation. Be they col-
lege rock bands and protest song activists in the 1970-80s, or the pop superstar Seo Taiji(Seo Taeji) in the 1990s, all strove to define originality as well as national identity in their imported pop styles. The hip-hop artists of today are facing the same kind of question, while at the same time the pace of globalization casts a doubt on the old conception of nation and national culture based on ethnic homogeneity.

These were the times when the Korean musicians attempted to navigate through the globally induced musical transformations and the nationally contested political/ideological changes, which tend to highlight the issue of cultural nationalism. By focusing on the three instances described above, this paper attempts to construct a nuanced yet critical view on how cultural nationalism is established in relation to the globalizing cultural hegemony.

2. Nationalism and popular culture

Nationalism is a notoriously difficult concept to apply across civilizations. For many western historians and social scientists, nationalism refers to a political ideology tied to the rise of the nation-state in European history(Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990). This theory, known as civic nationalism, becomes less convincing when it comes to East Asia since “the most important states of East Asia… were national states long before any of their European counterparts”(Arrighi, 2008). The long presence of stable national states with distinct linguis-
tic, ethnic, and cultural characteristics also contributed to the fact that “ethnic nationalism” is the prevailing notion of nationalism in many of these countries, which equates national identity with predominant ethnicity (Connor, 1994; Smith, 1995).

The social foundation for nationhood might have existed for a long time in the East, yet nationalism as a political ideology was clearly a modern import from the West. The ideological split between capitalist right and socialist left in the colonized world lasted throughout national liberation struggles, resulting in post-colonial regimes on both sides of the Cold War. Korea is probably the most dramatic example of two opposed visions of modern nationhood fighting over one nation (Shin and Robinson, 1999; Shin, 2006).

Popularization of nationalism is never an automatic process; it involves a great deal of efforts on the part of the state and/or the modern elite vying for political power. The “invention of tradition” — the creation of the myth of a nation that embodies immortality and ultimate virtues — is an important part of the process for this reason (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992). It would be a mistake, however, to think that “people” are relegated to a passive audience in the mythical theater of nation-state. For nationalism to work at the ideological level, it should be more of a “lived relation” (Althusser, 1969: 233) or “lived experience” (Eagleton, 1991: 148~150) of all the members of a given nation rather than just a useful fiction of the manipulative elite. People do actively participate in the rituals, create their own narratives, and express their sentiments and ideas about the nation as an imagined com-
community, which may or may not follow the script of the ruling elite. Therefore, popular culture in various forms—music, literature, theater, film, dance, painting, cartoon, etc.—is often much more instructive than the official doctrines of the nation-state or nationalist movement in revealing how a nation is constructed from the bottom up—in other words, from the lived experiences of ordinary people.

Unlike traditional folk culture, popular culture under capitalism has been increasingly commodified, mass produced, and globalized. Just as the ideology and institutions of nationalism and the nation-state were imported from the west, so were many models, forms, media, and technologies of modern popular culture—most notably film, recording and broadcasting industries. From the beginning, the mass-mediated popular culture of East Asia has become a “global mélange” in nature (Pieterse, 2003). This globalizing tendency has been countered and tempered by what can be dubbed as cultural nationalism—a set of ideological doctrines and practices that aim to preserve the cultural identity of the nation while selectively appropriating inroads of global cultural flows. The push and pull of global-national dynamics makes popular culture sometimes a highly politicized area of contention. It is not surprising that Korean popular music is full of such contentions between global influence and cultural nationalism, considering Korea’s checkered history of foreign occupation, nationalist mobilization, and political use of music in the modern era.

There are many ways to define what popular music is (Middleton, 1990; Negus, 1996; Shuker, 1998). Broadly speaking, it is considered a modern form of musical culture with technological—recording and broadcasting—as well as commercial underpinnings. In that sense, it was the influx of western music and recording business in the colonial era that set the stage for Korean popular music. Eu-Jeong Zhang (2005: 7) specifically points to the introduction of the phonograph as the point of departure from what she calls “proto-popular musical forms” of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, such as pansori (oral narrative poetry) and japga (light songs). 1)

The first popular music hit song was “Saeui Chanmi (The Praise of Death)” (Various Artists, 2003 [1926]), an adaptation of Iosif Ivanovich’s waltz, “Danube Waves”. While the lyrics were written in Korean, the song was recorded and released first in Japan. The singer, Yun Sim-deok, who had received classical music education in Japan, was the best-known Korean soprano at the time. A premier Korean modern girl (moga), Yun inspired many young men and women with her western-style “high life.” The tragic “double suicide” she committed with her illicit lover—they are said to have jumped off the ship into the waters of the Korean Strait—a year after the song’s release only in-

1) English translations of pansori and japga are taken from Kim (1997).
creased her mystique (Yi and Lee, 2006).

The cultural significance of “Saewi Chanmi” goes beyond this scandalous affair. The same conditions and processes that produced Korean popular music were at work in shaping the nationalist ideology—a western invention, imported through Japan, adopted by Koreans. The 1920s witnessed a strategic shift in Japanese colonial rule. As a response to the March First mass uprisings in 1919, the colonial authorities switched to the so-called cultural policy (bunka seiji) that allowed newspapers, magazines and other mass media institutions to be owned or operated by Koreans. The upshot of this policy change was a mushrooming of Korean-owned publications and the rise of “cultural nationalism” led by moderate intellectuals as well as business, religious and political leaders. Korean popular music was born in this atmosphere of cultural renaissance.

Colonial popular music had prospered throughout the 1930s before Japan’s war mobilization drive shut it down at the beginning of the following decade. There were four genres of popular music in this period: sinminyo (new folk songs), manyo (comic songs), trot/yuhaengga and “jazz songs” (Zhang, 2004; Lee, Young Mee, 2006). Among them, trot and jazz had an especially profound impact in shaping the post-colonial Korean popular music. Trot (also known as ppongjjak) typically employs the so-called yonanuki pentatonic scale, duple time, and characteristic vocal techniques, which make it sound similar to Japanese enka. Its roots in colonial yuhaengga (ryūkōka in Japanese, literally meaning “faddish songs”) indicate an inevitable intermingling between Korean and Japanese cul-
ture, making the music’s ambiguous national origin a flashpoint within academic and critical circles (Chung, 2001; Pak, 2006). Surely enough, trot has been denounced as “Japanese-influenced songs (waesaek gayo)” by some, while enjoying continuous popularity among many others. This kind of ambivalence toward Japan and Japanese culture, sometimes bordering on a schizophrenic attitude, is a hallmark of Korean cultural nationalism that grew out of Japanese domination over political, cultural and intellectual domains.

Jazz, on the other hand, was used as a blanket term for western popular music that included not only jazz proper, but also other kinds of Anglo-American, European, and Latin American pop styles. According to Sun-young Yoo, Gyeongseong (colonial Seoul) was a “cosmopolitan city” where not only Japanese and American, but also various European modernities all came in fragments, competing against one another. By the 1920s, the winner became clear as American jazz and Hollywood films dominated Gyeongseong’s cultural scenes. Soon American standards were applied to fashion, appearances, bodily gestures and even the way of walking. The rapid “embodiment” of American cultural norms among the cultured urban Koreans so deeply troubled nationalist intellectuals that they warned of the dangers of “Americanism” to little or no avail (Yoo, 2007: 231∼234). Starting with cover versions and adaptations in the early 1930s, however, Korean jazz musicians showed remarkable talent in assimilating the new western culture. In particular, Kim Hae-song composed such memorable original Korean jazz tunes as “Dabangeui Pureun Kkum (Blue Dreams in the Tearoom)” and “Cheong-
chun Gyegeup (The Youth Class)” (Various Artists, 1996). The desire to “modernize” the nation by learning, adapting and domesticating western culture is another hallmark of Korean cultural nationalism that originated during the colonial period.

The end of Japanese rule brought changes in the Korean music and entertainment business. Previously, akgeukdan (music drama troupe) was the prototypical show troupe where musicians, dancers, comedians and other kinds of popular entertainers worked for a living.2) As the U.S. military occupation began in South Korea, Kim Hae-song and other prominent akgeukdan musicians migrated to the newfangled jazz orchestras (gyeongeumakdan) that played at the dancehalls and clubs within the U.S. military bases. After the Korean War, the U.S. military camp shows settled in as the key talent pool for South Korean popular music (Shin et al., 2005: 20~27).


The history of rock music in South Korea is said to have begun in 1964 when camp show musicians like Shin Joong Hyun started bringing their music outside army barracks into the streets of Seoul. The stories of Shin Joong Hyun and the first generation of Korean “group

2) For more about akgeukdan, see Killick (1998).

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sound” rock have been told elsewhere in much detail (Shin et al., 2005; Kim and Shin, 2010). Here I will focus on the legendary clash of personality between Shin Joong Hyun and President Park Chung Hee (Bak Jeong-heui), and the conflicting imaginations of the Korean nation expressed in their own songs.

Park’s vision of the nation-state was shaped by his experiences during the colonial period as a military officer of the Japanese Imperial Army. The definitive document representing his militaristic nationalism is the National Charter of Education (Gugmin Gyoyuk Heonjang), whose striking resemblance to the Imperial Rescript on Education (Kyōiku Chokugo) of Meiji Japan reveals an underbelly of Park’s nationalist ideology.  

Recent studies show that in many respects the Park regime was modeled after Manchukuo, “a great laboratory” (Han, 2005) of the militaristic state formation in the early twentieth century:

The “Manchurians” led several realms in Park’s modernization project, including the formulation of the military nationalist buwang ideology. Even in the music world, they led the way, organizing the Korean Navy Orchestra and Army Orchestra, producing numerous songs that served the regime during important moments of state-building as well as in the dispatch of Korean forces to participate in the Vietnam War (Han, 2008).

Propaganda songs known as geonjeon gayo (literally, “wholesome songs”)

3) Most notably, the eleven professors at Chŏnnam National University who proclaimed “Our Educational Standards (Uri Gyoyuk Jipyo)” in 1978 pointed this out.
were such an important governing tool for Park that he wrote some of them himself, including the notorious “Naeui Joguk (My Fatherland)” 4).

Popular music historian Young Mee Lee (2005) quips, “[s]peaking of Japanese influence (waesaek), this song should be on the top of the list.” Indeed, “Naeui Joguk” sounds just like a Japanese war song (gunka) except for the Korean lyrics. With the full backing of an orchestra and a mixed choir, the song carries a dominant air:

The blue spirit of Mount Baekdu protects this land
The high vigor of Mount Hanla keeps our nation safe
...
The sun rises bright and clear from the East Sea
The mighty scenery, the natural beauty, this is my fatherland
...
Let us make a new history on our glorious fatherland
And forever our descendents will inherit the legacy
(Ministry of Culture, Communication, and Information 1977)

Since the late 1960s, group sound musicians had been a major victim of the Park regime’s oppressive cultural policy. Their charm was based on the contradiction between the global American and the local Korean — the very contradiction that ultimately sealed their fate. The first generation of group sounds had to deal with this contradiction in the most

4) Another important tool was censorship. See Mailiangkay (2006b), Kim and Shin (2010), and Mun (2005).
upfront manner because of their camp show background. The nationalist indoctrination of the Park regime apparently had a noticeable impact on their music. Accused of peddling “decadent foreign culture,” prominent group sound musicians responded by adopting a self-consciously nationalistic idiom. Take Shin’s 1972 masterpiece “Areumdaun Gangsan (The Beautiful Land)” for example:

We were born in this land
In this beautiful land, the land of pride
We will live
The red sun is shining brightly upon us
And white tides of the sea are together with us
How wonderful it is, in this land we are
(Shin Joong Hyun and the Men, 2002)

Although it is no match to “Naeui Joguk” in terms of patriotic zealotry, Shin clearly tried to make an appeal to the prevalent nationalist sentiment among Koreans. The crucial difference, however, can be found in their respective musical styles:

The blazing horns of the military marching band set the solemn tone of “Naeui Joguk,” followed by the mixed choir singing with a lockstep beat and machine-like discipline. Meanwhile, the 1980 version of “Areumdaun Gangsan” features a free-flowing, polyrhythmic performance of a new band, Shin Joong Hyun and the Music Power, that resembled

It took more than a decade, however, for Shin’s version of nationalism to be fully appreciated by the public. When the top female singer Lee Sun Hee (Yi Seon-heui) picked it up, a new generation of geonjon gayo was making a big wave thanks to the upcoming 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul. Lee’s version of “Areumdaun Gangsan” seized this opportunity and registered a smash hit (Lee, Sun Hee, 1988).

The next generation of Korean rock musicians came out of college campuses. College rock bands known as “campus group sounds” were heavily promoted by major broadcasting companies through Campus Song Contests (daehak gayoje) that were immensely popular until the late 1980s. In fact, the mass media not just endorsed the campus group sounds, but actively engaged in manufacturing their polished image. The same draconian policies the government had imposed upon the first generation group sounds to forcibly “clean up” their act were basically recycled, this time by the media’s own initiative. If the contestant had too long hair (in case of male), a rebellious look, or anything deemed inappropriate, then he or she could not pass the primary round and appear on television. Even the ludicrous injunction to literally translate English band names into Korean was laid upon both professional and campus group sounds alike. Hence Runway turned into Hwaljuro, Oxen into Hwangsoedul, Sand Pebbles into Moraewa Jagal, and so forth. Producing the Campus Song Contests, the broadcasting companies did
not hide their goal to promote a new style of geonjeon gayo that is not too overtly propagandistic and genuinely popular. Awarding songs with nationalist themes was a convenient way to achieve that goal.

Meanwhile, those who had initially found a musical inspiration first in the American modern folk of Bob Dylan and others in the struggle against the authoritarian regime, were more and more looking inward for their own musical self-expression. Since nationalism was no less strong in the left than the right of the Korean political spectrum, some Korean protest folk songs even come close to geonjeon gayo in their praise of nation and Korean-ness. For example, Kim Min-gi, the pioneer of Korean modern folk movement, wrote the lyrics of the song, “Nae Nara Nae gyeore(My Country, My Nation),” composed and first sung by the fellow folk singer Song Chang-sik:

See the sun rising from the East Sea
See whose path it shines on
It’s ours who maintain the noble purity
In the brilliant culture of our ancestors

(Song 1972)

Under the repressive cultural policy, Kim’s fate was very much the same as Shin Joong Hyun’s: an outright ban. Only in Kim’s case it was “dissidence(bulon)” rather than “decadence(toepye)” that made him a prime target of the culture police. And yet, as the lyrics above clearly indicate, “Nae Nara Nae Gyeore” was no less nationalistic than Shin’s
“Areumdaun Gangsan” or even the hyper-militarist “Naeui Joguk.” Had it not been for the lyricist, this one may well have made it to the official geonjeon gayo repertoire. Instead of being inserted in any popular music records as a government-mandated geonjeon gayo, “Nae Nara Nae Gyeore” ended up on the blacklist just like the majority of Kim’s songs at the time.5)

“Nae Nara Nae Gyeore” reconfirms the pervasiveness of nationalism regardless of political leanings. Democratic social movements and student activists also adopted the language of nationalism in their fight against the authoritarian regime. From the late 1970s through the 1980-90s, Kim’s modern folk movement evolved into the Song Movement, an important cultural wing of the powerful student movement (Hwang, 2006). Protest songs were affected by radical left-wing ideology that made a comeback to the student movement circles and the emerging labor movement (Lee, 2002; Park, 2005). Radical nationalism criticized South Korea’s dependence upon the U.S. as colonialism or neocolonialism, claiming that true “national liberation” would not come until the U.S. forces withdraw from the South and the two Koreas are peacefully reunited. Many protest songs were written on such themes as anti-colonial struggles against Japan, AntiAmerican protests, and the prospect of the unified Korea as a peaceful, democratic, and egalitarian nation free from foreign intervention.

5) See Hwang (2016) for a concise introduction to Kim Min-gi’s works.

Democratic transition in Korea was a slow process that took a decade since the 1987 uprisings. By contrast, music industry expanded rapidly in the meantime as a result of sustained economic prosperity and cultural liberalization. The Korean pop music market became larger, more diversified, and niftier at catching up with the latest global trend. Some musicians were particularly eager to take chances with new styles coming from overseas, mostly the U.S. and the U.K.

One of them was Seo Taiji, whose uncanny ability to assimilate new Anglo-American trends closely matched Shin Joong Hyun’s. In Seo Taiji’s time, hip-hop was the new global language of the youth. Originally a heavy metal rocker, Seo was an early adapter to hip-hop culture in Korea. In 1991, he formed a three-man crew named Seo Taiji and Boys, which dominated the Korean pop music scene for the next five years of its existence. Although there were others who played hip-hop music and rapped in Korean before him, Seo was largely responsible for popularizing Korean rap/hip-hop to the mass audience. Seo Taiji’s version of Korean hip-hop was no different from Shin’s rock music in terms of injecting national consciousness into the foreign music

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6) This section was inspired by Nathan Hesselink’s presentation, “MC Sniper’s ‘Han’gugin(Korean)’: Folk music as cultural capital in South Korean rap” at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, March 5, 2004. Um (2013) has also covered much of the same materials discussed in this section.
style. After a huge commercial success from his debut, Seo Taiji boldly added a traditional Korean wind instrument, *taepyeongso* — also known as the vernacular name, *nalari* — to “Hayeoga,” the lead track of the second album that broke almost all sales records in Korea. He took a step further in the third album, taking on the issue of Korean reunification in the song entitled “*Balhaereul Kkumkkumyeo* (Dreaming of Balhae)” with a reference to the middle-age kingdom of Balhae located in northern Korea and Manchuria (Seo Taiji and Boys, 1993; 1994).

Even though his vision of Korean reunification was not exactly the same as radical nationalist vision of the protest song movement, Seo repeatedly showed his own brand of social consciousness. Blending heavy metal and abrasive rap, he shouted out against oppressive high school culture in “*Gyosil Idea* (Classroom Ideology)”, and exhorted runaway kids to return to their family while sympathizing with their despair in “*Come Back Home*” (Jung, 2006). He also touched upon the sensitive issue of drug addiction in “*Jugeumeui Neupt* (Deadly Swamp)” and “*Jik’il-baksawa Haid* (Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde)”, and even took a highly publicized stand against the governmental censorship that still remained on the book. Instead of revising the censored part as was the custom, he just lifted the entire lyrics from the song “*Sidae Yugam* (The Regret of the Times)” and released it as an instrumental track (Seo Taiji and Boys, 1994; 1995). This act of defiance raised awareness of authoritarian legacy among the public, boosting the effort of the protest song musicians/activists to eliminate the censorship.

In the wake of Seo’s meteoric rise and sudden exit — the Taiji Boys

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retired in 1996 citing “stress and fatigue from the creative process”—hip-hop had been prospering both in the mainstream and the underground. Within the Korean hip-hop community, however, there are some bumps and bruises, especially regarding the meaning of “real(jeongtong) hip-hop” (Lee, Jung-yup, 2000; Yang, 2001). Whereas the term “real hip-hop” has been floated around the American hip-hop community to indicate the authenticity of the music and/or musician, the Korean jeongtong hip-hop controversy takes on a new dimension with regard to language and nationality. Naturally, the verbal language component is much more important in hip-hop than any other genre of pop music because rapping is a kind of spoken word performance. The power of English, the mother tongue of American-born hip-hop, looms large in the Korean hip-hop community as Korean rappers try to mimic and learn rhyming, flow, and other verbal skills from their American counterparts.

To be sure, from the very beginning Korean rappers were determined to rap in Korean with occasional English phrases thrown in the mix. However, it is in general a difficult, and sometimes awkward, practice to transform the verbal characteristics of one language and fit it into the mold of another, totally different language. This appears to have been an undercurrent of the jeongtong controversy within the Korean hip-hop community. The emergence of bilingual Korean-American rappers in the hip-hop scene has brought up the language issue to the

7) See Yang(2016: 100~106) for a further discussion of authenticity in Korean hip-hop.
forefront. From Drunken Tiger and 1TYM (pronounced “one time”) in the late 1990s, to the recent commercial success of Epyk High, the hip-hop crews featuring Korean-American rappers have raised their profile considerably. Compared to Seo Taiji or other early Korean hip-hop artists, their music and rapping are closely following the mannerism of American hip-hop, much of which come from their upbringing in the U.S.

On the other side of bilingual-binational hip-hop is what might be called tojong (indigenous) hip-hop. Advocates of indigenous hip-hop are not simply native Korean rappers, but active promoters of ethnic nativism in their music. MC Sniper is probably the best example for this kind of hip-hop. Following Seo Taiji’s precedence, MC Sniper holds the “national tradition” up high with liberal use of traditional instruments in his signature song, “Hangugin (Korean)):

> Jeogtong hip-hop? Go ask yo mama

> Life of the Korean nation, yo! Goguryeo hip-hop!

(MC Sniper 2003)

He proudly brings up Goguryeo, the kingdom that dominated a large portion of Manchuria and the northern half of the Korean peninsula in the ancient times. This is again in line with the nationalist streak of Seo, who made reference to Balhae, the successor kingdom of Goguryeo, in his aforementioned song. It is also worth noting that Goguryeo has become a flashpoint of nationalistic fervor between South
Korea and China with regard to the latter’s “Northwest Project” of ancient historical research (Ahn, 2006).

There is no clear binational/nativist divide in their attitudes toward jeongtong or tojong hip-hop. As one of the very first Korean-American rappers who came over to Korea, Drunken Tiger has been experimenting with indigenous Korean melody and rhythm for many years. In contrast, some native Korean hip-hop aficionados still do not fully embrace rapping in Korean. The controversy over jeongtong hip-hop reveals the multidimensionality of cultural nationalism in the age of global culture. As one astute observer of Korean hip-hop put it recently:

[T]here are complex and divergent routes to localization. In this context we need to understand the contour of ‘local specificities’ as necessarily including a number of factors such as pop/underground; domestic Korean and transnational influences; youth culture; language, aural and visual elements; racial perceptions; contexts and interactions of virtual communities; live performance space; national and regional characteristics; the music industry; national pride; government support, etc. (Um, 2013: 61).

6. Conclusion: Nationalism(s) in Korean Popular Music

By and large, the development of Korean popular music has been driven by the western influence, from Yun Sim-deok’s classical elegy
to Shin Joong Hyun’s psychedelic rock to Seo Taiji’s b-boy hip-hop. And yet, cultural nationalism is present at almost every turn of the history of Korean popular music. It appears in a number of different ways — most obviously in lyrics, but also using traditional musical elements as familiar symbols of national culture. This attests to the power and durability of nationalism as both official and popular ideology throughout modern Korean history.

On the other hand, it goes to show that cultural nationalism does not necessarily engender a monolithic national culture. Even the most propagandistic geonjeon gayo songs adopt a variety of musical styles of foreign origin. In spite of common references to ancestors, glory, national heritage, fatherland etc., the nation in Park Chung Hee’s “Naeui Jogak” differs from Kim Min-gi’s “Nae Nara Nae Gyeore” or Shin Joong Hyun’s “Areumdaun Gangsan” in terms of political connotation. The emergence of Korean-American hip-hop and other kinds of immigrant music makes one think that ethnic and linguistic homogeneity — the linchpin of Korean ethnic nationalism — may not be as stable as has been thought, given the increasing global exchange of peoples and cultures in and out of Korea. 8)

If the jeongtong hip-hop controversy is any indication, cultural nationalism will continue its influence over popular music and culture for the

8) Popular music is but one aspect of a larger picture. The much acclaimed South Korean film industry represents a significant change Robinson (2005: 15) describes as “vanishing meta-narratives of nation.” Also, Cho (2008) observes a transformation of nationalism through the 1997 Economic Crisis and the rise of South Korean athletes in the global sports market.
foreseeable future. While it has had a tendency to produce inane *geonjeon gayo* propaganda songs, it has also shown a potential to push brilliant musicians to assimilate and indigenize global trends into something new — something that allows the Korean people to imagine and re-imagine their national community in different ways. Despite the widespread notion of ethnic homogeneity, cultural hybridity has been the driving force behind the persistence of Korea’s cultural nationalism.
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한국 대중음악에서 나타나는 문화적 민족주의의 혼종성: “사의 찬미”에서 “정통 힙합”까지

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주요어: 문화적 민족주의, 혼종성, 록, 포크, 힙합